Australian Environmental Bulletin

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Welcome to the Australian Environmental Bulletin prepared by the U.S. Commercial Service in Australia. This publication contains business intelligenceon the Australian environmental market.

The data provided in this bulletin is given solely as an information resource and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

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Recycling within Australia's Newsprint Industry

The Australian newsprint industry has launched a new plan to increase newsprint recycling rates over the current 74.5 percent rate already achieved. The new plan has been published in a report titled, "National Environmental Sustainability Plan (Newspapers) 2006-2010" and can be viewed at: www.pneb.com.au

According to the report, before 1990, Australia was recycling 28 percent of the newsprint consumed in the country. By 2001, the rate had risen to 72 percent. The 2004 rate of 74.5 percent appears to be the highest national average of newspaper recycling in the world.

The plan has been developed as a voluntary partnership within the industry and in collaboration with the Australian Government. Members of the partnership include:

Norske Skog Australasia

Norske Skog is the second largest manufacturer of newsprint in the world and the only manufacturer of newsprint in Australia. Norske Skog Australasia (NSA) has two paper mills in Australia — at Albury in southern NSW and Boyer near Hobart. The company produces 500,000 tons of newsprint and related grades in Australia each year and a further 350,000 tons in the region which includes New Zealand. At Albury, NSA de-inks recovered newspaper and magazines to provide recycled fibre as a raw material for both Albury and Boyer mills' production of papers. This is added to fiber produced from forestry thinnings and residues of forest harvesting for timber for housing and construction.

The Albury de-inking plant was commissioned in 1993 and enlarged in 1995 at a total cost of AU$135,000,000. The newsprint producer also spent $10,000,000 in recycling support between 1991 and 2004.

Publishers National Environment Bureau (PNEB)

The members of the PNEB are Australia's major newspaper and magazine companies. They are:

- ACP Publishing Pty Ltd
- APN Newspapers Limited
- Independent Print Media Group
- John Fairfax Holdings
- Marinya Media (Rural Press Limited)
- News Limited
- Pacific Magazines
- PMP Ltd
- West Australian Newspapers

As well as supporting newspaper recycling by stipulating recycled fiber in newsprint contracts, the publishing industry has contributed AU$39,000,000 supporting newspaper and magazine recycling since the PNEB was formed in 1991.

Initiatives under the new plan include:

- Offering long term contracts to Local Councils and paper processors for the collection and purchase of material collected at kerbside.
- Expanding de-inking plant capacity so that NSA can accept a further 17,000 tons of collected newspapers.

Despite these plans the industry has pointed out that recycling rates for newsprint have reached a plateau and further increases will be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless the new plan presents an opportunity for more efficient resource recovery and processing technology to be implemented. In addition, the plan raises issues associated with energy and water conservation that will also need to be addressed by the participating members.

Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate

The inaugural meeting of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate was held in Sydney on January 11-12, 2006. The historic meeting involving Ministers and business representatives from the six founding members Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and United States, agreed on a new model for international climate change and energy collaboration.

The Partnership essentially recognises that technology collaboration, long term commitments and significant investments are needed to tackle the sustainable generation and use of energy. Acceleration of technology, especially low emissions technology, collaboration between governments, business and research organisations to foster innovation and to implement practical, achievable, economically sustainable solutions to climate change are essential to a sustainable solution to climate change.

Energy and environment ministers from the six countries met with over 120 senior business representatives from the electricity, mining, aluminium, cement, steel, finance and renewable sectors. This is the first time that industry has been afforded such an opportunity in global climate change discussions.

The Asia-Pacific Partnership established eight government and business taskforces on (1) cleaner fossil energy; (2) renewable energy and distributed generation; (3) power generation and transmission; (4) steel;

(5) aluminium; (6) cement; (7) coal mining; and (8) buildings and appliances. Australia will lead the taskforce on cleaner fossil energy. It is a reality that fossil fuels will remain the dominant source of the world's energy needs for the next century. Clean technologies will therefore be a critical part to the overall solution to climate change problems. Australia will also chair the aluminum taskforce, co-chair the renewable energy and distributed generation taskforce and play a leading role in the buildings and appliances taskforce. Asia-Pacific Partnership Ministers agreed to meet again in 2007.

Australian Firms with a Commitment to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Greenhouse Challenge, launched in 1995, is a joint voluntary initiative between the national government and industry to abate greenhouse gas emissions. Under this initiative, participating companies sign agreements with the Government that provide a framework for reporting on actions undertaken to abate emissions. The program encourages companies to reduce their emissions through self-regulation and presents a valuable resource for environmental firms seeking to identify potential customers. Many of the companies that have signed on to the Challenge may be open to reviewing air pollution control technology as well as other equipment with applications in energy and process efficiency.

As of July 2005 more than 700 businesses have signed onto the Challenge, including the following electricity generators:

CS Energy Ltd
Delta Electricity
Edison Mission Energy Holdings (EME)
Hazelwood Power
Hydro Tasmania
Loy Yang Power
Macquarie Generation
NRG Gladstone Operating Services Pty Ltd
Stanwell Corporation Limited
Tarong Energy Corporation Ltd
Western Power Corporation
Yallourn Energy Pty Ltd

For information on the many other businesses that are participating in the challenge please go to:
http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/challenge/about/index.html

Major Australian Environmental Trade Show – May 2006

Enviro06
Date: May 9-11, 2006
Location: Melbourne, Victoria
Comments: Enviro is the only show of its kind in Australia dedicated to the general environmental industry. The show is being sponsored by two peak industry associations: the Australian Water Association and the Waste Management Association of Australia. The show which commenced in 2000 is held every two years and is expected to attract 6,000 visitors in 2006.

More information on the show is available from:
http://www.enviroaust.net/

The National Pollutant Inventory – Emissions from Metal Ore Mining

The National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) is an internet database designed to provide the community, industry and government with information on the types and amounts of certain chemicals being emitted into the environment. Australian industrial facilities using more than a specified amount of the chemicals listed on the NPI reporting list were required to begin estimating emissions of these substances from July 1998.

The NPI assists with policy and program formulation at all levels of government. It has also helped focus attention on certain manufacturing processes which could be cleaner or more efficient.

Emissions from the Metal Ore Mining Sector

According to the NPI, a total of 167 facilities in the metal ore mining sector reported on 46 substances in the 2004-05 reporting year. These facilities included coal, iron ore, bauxite, copper ore, gold, nickel ore, silver-lead-zinc ore, metallic mineral ore and uranium mines.

The mining sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the Australian economy. Due to this growth, the mining sector also reports the largest emissions to the NPI. This sector is the highest emitter of particulate matter 10 micrometres or less, cyanide (inorganic) compounds, nickel and compounds and mercury and compounds.

In the past year this sector reported decreased emissions in sulfur dioxide, ammonia, cyanide (inorganic) compounds, manganese and compounds and lead and compounds.

The following table sourced from the NPI at www.npi.gov.au shows a partial list of substances emitted from metal ore mines:

Substance	Total (Kg/year)
Particulate matter 10.0 um	240,000,000
Sulfur Dioxide	210,000,000
Oxides of Nitrogen	60,000,000
Carbon Monoxide	48,000,000
Total Volatile Organic Compounds	3,800,000
Ammonia	2,000,000
Cyanide (inorganic) Compounds	2,000,000
Manganese and Compounds	1,600,000
Carbon Disulfide	1,000,000
Copper and Compounds	710,000
Nickel and Compounds	460,000
Sulfuric Acid	290,000
Zinc and Compounds	290,000
Total Nitrogen	260,000
Fluoride Compounds	170,000
Chromium Compounds	150,000
Hydrochloric Acid	140,000
Lead and Compounds	100,000
Cobalt and Compounds	70,000
Formaldehyde	66,000
Arsenic and Compounds	57,000

Source: National Pollutant Inventory (www.npi.gov.au)

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project - Victoria

Scope of the project

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project is a significant water resource management project for Australia. The US$375 million project involves the construction of almost 9,000 kilometers of reticulated pipeline to replace 16,000 kilometers of existing, highly inefficient open channels. The project will supply stock and domestic water to approximately 6,000 rural customers and 36 towns across a region that covers ten percent of the total land area of Victoria, from the Grampians to the Murray River.

Need for the project

The open channel system that currently services the Wimmera Mallee region is unsustainable. At present, 85 per cent of water in the system is wasted through seepage and evaporation. Both waterways in the region and the community have suffered as a result.

The drought has highlighted that a sustainable water supply is necessary to secure the future of the region. Farms and towns have faced increasingly onerous water restrictions in recent years, threatening the viability of agriculture and business in the region. A secure supply of water is needed to enable diversification, promote investment and regenerate the regional economy. The pipeline provides the only way to deliver additional environmental flows while maintaining the economic and social fabric of the region.

Whilst the project is not a technically challenging engineering task, the sheer scale of the project creates risks around procurement strategies and timing of delivery.

The materials required include over 7,000km of PVC pipe, hundreds of kilometers of steel pipe together with approximately 40 main pumping stations and up to 100 booster pumping systems.

For more information on this project please contact John Kanawati, U.S. Commercial Service, Sydney at email: john.kanawati@mail.doc.gov

State-based Licensing Requirements for Remediation Technology

In Australia, the state governments and local councils hold primary responsibility for regulating the remediation industry. This can lead to differences between states of legislative requirements of the remediator and hence when remediation services are being supplied in Australia, the relevant authority should be consulted.

In New South Wales for example, the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) assesses and regulates the deployment of remediation technologies for treating contaminants and sites within the state. Preliminary checks, controls on operation and monitoring of environmental performance is first applied to determine if the proposed technology will achieve the required outcome particularly in regards to emission limits and soil clean up levels. The assessment process also takes into account site specific conditions such as contaminants, concentration ranges and potential environmental and human health impacts. Proposed technology would also be expected to demonstrate proof of performance through a pilot exercise, under a DEC license, before consideration could be given to allow the technology to operate at a commercial scale.

End of report.